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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000551

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [MZ](#)
SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE: FLURRY OF FRELIMO MEETINGS IN MAPUTO;
PREPARATIONS FOR IX PARTY CONGRESS UNDERWAY

REF: A. MAPUTO 00278

[1](#)B. MAPUTO 00415

[1](#)C. 05 MAPUTO 00681

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Classified By: Ambassador Helen La Lime for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (SBU) Mozambique's ruling party, FRELIMO, wrapped up a week of intense party activity in advance of the Ninth FRELIMO Party Congress, scheduled for November 10 - 14 in the central provincial capital of Quelimane, Zambezia province. Discussions focused around the fight against poverty and the mobilization of the party machine in advance of the upcoming electoral cycle, with provincial elections scheduled for 2007, municipal elections for 2008 and presidential/legislative elections due in 2009. The week-long series of meetings comes at a time when FRELIMO and its leader, President Guebuza, face increased criticism from the population. Meanwhile, the effort to play up FRELIMO's visibility in government is growing. End Summary.

FRELIMO: Shifting into High Gear

[1](#)2. (U) Mozambican President Armando Guebuza made several appearances at a week-long series of high-level meetings of the ruling FRELIMO party held between April 21 and April 30 in the cities of Maputo and neighboring Matola. This marathon of FRELIMO party gatherings -- which included the FRELIMO National Cadre Conference, a meeting of the FRELIMO Youth Organization, an extraordinary session of the FRELIMO Central Committee, and the Association of Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle National Conference -- aimed to mobilize and energize key party organs in advance of the Ninth Party Congress scheduled for late this year.

[1](#)3. (U) During his opening remarks at the National Cadre Conference, Guebuza reminded party members that the main purpose of the Congress would be to prepare the "entire party machinery" to ensure a FRELIMO victory in the approaching electoral cycle. (Note: Under the current timetable, the first elections for Provincial Assemblies will be held in late 2007, the third elections for Municipal Councils in late 2008, and the fourth multi-party Presidential and Legislative elections in late 2009. End Note.) Guebuza also urged the more than 1,600 FRELIMO cadres present at the three-day

conference to take an active role in the fight against poverty by promoting such virtues as "self-esteem, patriotism, and pride in being Mozambican."

14. (U) A similar message was echoed in Guebuza's remarks to the Association of Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle (ACLLN), where he urged this "important segment of Mozambican society" to revisit its strategies to combat poverty, stressing the example veterans can set in addressing red tape, the spirit of apathy and drift ("deixa andar"), corruption, and crime.

Party Congress Makes a Strategic Move

15. (SBU) At the April 26 close of the one-day extraordinary meeting of the FRELIMO Central Committee, a powerful 160-plus member party organ, it was announced that the Ninth FRELIMO Party Congress would held in the central city of Quelimane, the capital of Zambezia province, from November 10 - 14. This is the first time since independence that the congress will be outside the Maputo area and is a strategic move for FRELIMO. Zambezia, the second most populous province in Mozambique, has long been a stronghold of the main opposition party RENAMO and is one of only two provinces where it outpolled FRELIMO in the 2004 general elections.

16. (C) This move also comes at a time when RENAMO is facing increased defections from its ranks. In early April, 12 RENAMO members in the northern province of Cabo Delgado abandoned the party. One of them was Saide Assane, the RENAMO candidate for mayor who was defeated in a highly contested May 2005 by-election in the town on Mocimboa da Praia (ref C). He has since joined the ranks of FRELIMO. Though RENAMO claims Assane was offered a deal by FRELIMO that would free him from prosecution for his role in the September clashes in Mocimboa da Praia, no evidence of such has been made public.

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Grousing Behind the Scenes

17. (C) This intense political activity on the part of FRELIMO in advance of the upcoming electoral marathon comes at a time when faith in the party may be slipping. Now more than a year since Guebuza took office, some who believed he would usher in improvements in their lives have grown disillusioned. The increasing cost of living is sapping enthusiasm for Guebuza's rhetoric. Despite some advances, including a new procurement law that favors Mozambican nationals, the decentralization of business licensing, the allocation of seven billion meticaïs (approximately USD 280,000) to each of the country's 128 districts (ref B), and the sacking of a few mid-level corrupt officials, many Mozambicans, especially those in rural areas who make up the majority of the electorate, probably do not notice these improvements and instead are troubled by much more immediate concerns due to the rising price of basic commodities such as rice and bread and increasing transport costs.

Increasing FRELIMO Visibility in Government

18. (SBU) Those who followed the flurry of party gatherings have warned that an increased subordination of government policy to FRELIMO politics is on the horizon, as the party machine begins its quest to reintegrate itself fully and actively into government practices. In fact, "the role of the party in government" is one of eight agenda items for discussion at the upcoming Congress. Raul Domingos, leader of one of the small opposition parties, PDD, in a conversation with emboff warned that the trend was clearly toward more and more dominance by FRELIMO. He cautioned that the recent trips by President Guebuza into the provinces,

ostensibly government fact-finding tours, are also thinly veiled efforts to boost FRELIMO's standing -- he noted that the entourage usually includes non-government FRELIMO central committee members, as well as ministers and their staff. Separately, according to the press, in a recent stop in Nampula province several ministers were introduced as senior FRELIMO members first and then government officials second.

La Lime